REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-31 and 33-70 are pending in the application.

Claims 1, 10, 19, 23, 28, 37, 46, and 55 have been amended. Support for the amendments to these claims can be found, at least, on page 11, lines 3-13 of the specification. Support for the amendments to claims 10, 28, 37, 46, and 55 can also be found, at least, on page 5, lines 23-30, page 10, lines 3-13, and page 11, lines 3-13 of the specification. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Claims 1-4, 6-25, 28-31 and 33-70 are rejected.

Claims 26 and 27 are objected to.

Claim Objections

Claims 26 and 27 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants assert that these claims are patentable due to their dependence upon allowable claim 27. If necessary, Applicants will rewrite these claims in independent form at a later time.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 6-10, 12-17, 19-21, 23, 24, 26-28, 30, 33-37, 39-44, 46, 48, 51-55, 57-62 and 64-70 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over "Request for Comments 2866: RADIUS Accounting" (hereinafter referred to as "RFC 2866") in view of Hundscheidt, et al., European Patent Application Publication No., EP 1 014 619 A1 (hereinafter referred to as "Hundscheidt").

With respect to amended claim 1, the cited art does not teach or suggest "associating a session identifier with a user, wherein the session identifier is associated with the user by a network access server" and "providing the session identifier to an off-load server, wherein the session identifier is provided to the off-load server directly from the network access server" where "the network access server is configured to include the session identifier in a first request

sent to an AAA module" and "the off-load server is configured to include the session identifier in a second request sent to the AAA module."

The Final Office Action mailed April 6, 2006 (hereinafter referred to as "FOA") equates the Mobile Services Switching Center (MSC) taught in Hundscheidt with the "off-load server" recited in claim 1. FOA, p. 5. However, the MSC taught in Hundscheidt does not receive a session identifier "directly from the network access server" while also "includ[ing] the session identifier in a second request sent to the AAA module." Accordingly, Hundscheidt does not teach or suggest claim 1.

Hundscheit's MSC can be a standalone device or integrated with an access server. Advisory Action, p. 2; Hundscheidt, Fig. 1. As noted in previous responses, all communication with the RADIUS server takes place via the access server. *See, e.g.,* Hundscheidt, paragraph 35. Accordingly, when the MSC is a standalone device, the MSC is clearly not configured to include the session identifier in any request (let alone the second request described in claim 1) sent to an AAA module.

When the MSC includes an access server, the MSC does not receive the session identifier "directly from the network access server." During normal call establishment, the integrated access server (which is part of the MSC in this configuration) generates a new session identifier. Thus, during normal call establishment, the integrated device (the combination of MSC and integrated access server) generates the session identifier itself. *See, e.g.,* Hundscheidt, paragraph 43. Accordingly, the integrated device does not receive a session identifier directly from an access server.

Furthermore, unlike claim 1, this integrated device, which can communicate with the RADIUS server via the integrated access server, does not send "a second request to an AAA module," where the second request is in addition to a first request sent by a network access server. When the integrated device handles calls normally, the integrated device itself sends all of the requests relating to a particular call to the RADIUS server itself. *See, e.g.,* Hundscheidt, paragraph 43. No other access server (other than the one that is part of the integrated device) sends requests that include the session identifier to the RADIUS server. Accordingly, the integrated device does not send a second request.

The Examiner also cites paragraph 49 of Hundscheidt, which describes call reestablishment. FOA, p. 2. In this call reestablishment scenario, a subscriber can roam to the coverage area of another MSC with another access server. Hundscheidt, paragraph 45. Here, an integrated device (the combined MSC and access server) that handles the reestablished call will initially not know that a session identifier has already been assigned to the call and will simply contact the RADIUS server to begin establishing a new PPP session. The RADIUS server then determines that the subscriber already has an ongoing PPP session, obtains the original session identifier associated with that session, and provides that session identifier to the integrated device. Hundscheidt, paragraph 49. Thus, the RADIUS server (not the network access server that assigned the original session identifier) provides the session identifier to the integrated device. Accordingly, the integrated device does not receive the session identifier "directly from the network access server" that associated the session identifier with a user.

Additionally, the integrated device of Hundscheidt is not configured to include the session identifier in a second request sent to the AAA module. For example, in paragraph 49, Hundscheidt teaches that a session identifier used in a previous call can be sent from a RADIUS server to the integrated device, which stores the received session identifier in the call data record, which can later be sent to a billing center. Hundscheidt, paragraph 49. While this describes how the session identifier can be sent from the RADIUS server to the integrated device, the cited art neither teaches nor suggests that the integrated device then include the session identifier in a second request sent to an AAA module. Accordingly, the cited art neither teaches nor suggests "the off-load server is configured to include the session identifier in a second request sent to the AAA module," as recited in claim 1.

As explained above, in each of the scenarios described in the cited portions of Hundscheidt, the MSC does not both (1) receive a session identifier directly from the access server that associated that session identifier with a user and (2) send a second request (in addition to a first request sent by the access server that associated the session identifier with the user) that includes the session identifier to an AAA module. As noted on page 5 of FOA, RFC 2866 also fails to teach or suggest such features.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, as are dependent claims 3 and 6-9. Claims 19-21, 23, 24, and 26-27 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

With respect to amended claim 10, the cited art fails to teach or suggest "determining whether a session identifier value is provided by an access server to an offload server," where "the off-load server is configured to use a packetized data protocol to establish a network connection between communication equipment operated by the user and a server operated by a network service provider in response to receiving a request from the access server."

As noted above, the FOA equates the MSC, or the integrated combination of MSC and access server, with the "offload server." FOA, p. 5. However, the MSC is part of a circuit-switched network. *See, e.g.,* Hundscheidt, Fig. 1 and paragraphs 9-11. Thus, the MSC clearly does not use a packetized data protocol to establish a network connection. Instead, the MSC relies upon an access server for such a network connection. Hundscheidt, paragraph 31.

Furthermore, the MSC (both alone or integrated with an access server) clearly does not establish a packetized network connection "in response to receiving a request from the access server," as recited in claim 10, since doing so would effectively require the MSC of Hundscheidt to be both the "access server" and the "offload server" of claim 10. In particular, claim 10 makes it clear that the "access server" provides the session identifier to the "offload server," while the "offload server" establishes the packetized network connection. In Hundscheidt, the access server both provides the session identifier to the MSC and establishes a connection to the Internet. Hundscheidt, paragraphs 31 and 38. The MSC (equated with the offload server) clearly cannot both receive a session identifier from an access server (which would require the MSC to be separate from the access server) and establish a packetized network connection (which would require the MSC to be integrated with the access server). Thus, Hundscheidt has not shown the specific configuration of access server and offload server described in claim 10. As noted on page 5 of FOA, RFC 2866 also fails to teach or suggest such features.

Accordingly, claims 10 and its dependent claims 12-17 are clearly patentable over the cited art for at least the foregoing reasons. Claims 28, 30, 33-37, 39-44, 46, 48, 51-55, 57-62, and 64-70 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

Claims 2, 4-5, 11, 18, 22, 25, 29, 31, 38, 45, 47, 49, 50, 56 and 63 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over RFC 2866 and Hundscheidt, and further in view of "Request for Comments 2867: RADIUS Accounting Modifications for Tunnel Protocol Support" (RFC 2867). These claims are patentable over the cited art for at least the foregoing reasons provided above with respect to claims 1, 10, 19, 23, 28, 37, 46, 55, and 68.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application and the claims therein are believed to be in condition for allowance without any further examination and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5087.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on October 4, 2006.

Brenna A. Brock 10/4/2006

Attorney for Applicant(s) Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

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